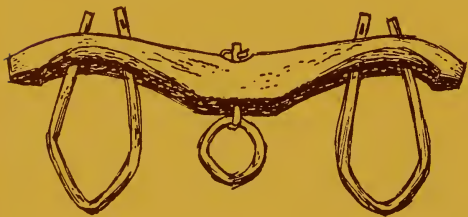


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# The Lincoln Memorial

*An Ode for Lincoln's Birthday*

MAYCE F. SEYMOUR





THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

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for Lincoln's Birthday*



# THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

AN ODE  
FOR LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

BY  
MAYCE F. SEYMOUR



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**An Ode  
for Lincoln's Birthday**



## THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

WHEREVER Man, the Builder, rears a home,  
He builds a statelier structure and more fair,  
A tower, a Gothic spire, Byzantine dome,  
Enriched with reverential and enduring art,  
And summons a God to make His dwelling there.  
Here may He brood in mystic peace apart,  
And in men's hearts engender lasting fame,  
Linked with melodious and compelling name.

But as the ages pass away,  
Temples and gods to time and change succumb,  
Victims, like man, of frail mortality;

The temples crumble to decay,

The temple bells are dumb.

Yet to the undaunted worshipper there come  
New visions of more lasting deity,  
And soon on ancient hill and by historic stream  
New domes and spires

Answer the morning's rousing signal beam.  
Fresh kindled are the altar fires,  
New images the niches grace,  
Beneficent, the god, new-throned, to worshipping  
          throngs reveals his face.

Still stands the stately Parthenon,  
A godless and deserted shrine,  
Though wantonly wrecked and ravaged, a ruin divine;  
And still its majesty and its perfection speak  
Of that rich time when Athene smiled upon  
The gifted and inspired Greek.

And when men's hearts forgot the Olympian host,  
And the great hierarchy of splendid Rome,  
They builded them in East and West,  
Lasting until this hour,  
The shining minaret and Gothic tower,  
'Neath which, with pious breath,  
To-day pass high and low, the rich and poor,  
To bend the knee, repeat the holy shibboleth.  
Christ and Mohammed, Mohammed and the Christ,  
Cherished the one by Christian, one my Moor,  
Between them part the Western world to-day

Where once the pagan deities held undisputed sway.  
A thousand minarets in sunlight shine,  
A thousand Gothic spires invoke the blue,  
Man dreams again his dream of the divine,  
And works in stone to keep his vision true.

To keep her vision true, America  
Has built a temple, a new Parthenon,  
And dedicated to a godlike son.

Within the Founder's city,  
By the Potomac's living stream  
Rises this fairest temple of the West,  
The marble image of a nation's dream,  
Shrine of the new, the great America,  
Symbol of all that she holds holiest, best.

To-day and every day  
The breezes kiss its roof and play  
Among its Doric columns, graceful yet severe;  
White and cool

Its image drowns in a pool.

Nature spreads at its feet  
A wistful beauty that like the temple knows  
(Sweet wisdom of the lily and the rose)  
Only its own perfection, finished and complete.

And overhead, in the deep southern sky,  
The clouds pass worshipfully by.

Greek and not Greek, no old world god dwells here,  
Not Zeus or great Athene, goddess fair,

Not Buddha or the Christ ;

But a majestic figure and serene,  
Seated within the open audience room,  
A giant in form, a kindly god in mien,  
With hands of blessing on his marble chair,  
And brooding and compassionate face,  
He radiates beneficence and peace.

To young and old, to bond and free  
Extends his Christlike charity ;  
Mighty in mercy, in power to forgive,  
With godlike will to let all creatures live,

His is the faith

More strong than death  
In man and in democracy.

TURN for a moment now across the seas  
To where, in France, Napoleon,  
The Gallic demigod, yea, god indeed,  
Sleeps in his tomb within *Les Invalides*.

Genius of pent-up power,  
Guided by Cæsar and him of Macedon,  
He did not shrink to see his Europe bleed,  
And her strong manhood laid upon the fires  
Of his ambition's funeral pyres.

And still so potent is that passionate breast,  
He will not stay entombed, at rest;  
But only now, as if he gave the word,  
A ghastly signal round the world was heard;  
Europe was wracked with strife;  
His spirit stirred, enkindled warrior flame,  
Menaced the heart of life.

Still thrilled men's hearts at mention of his name,  
And on the altar was laid the awful price  
Of hate and greed, a bloody sacrifice.

The "Scourge of Europe," demigod of power,  
Self-willed, unbending, lost to faith and love,  
He ruled the world until the bitter hour  
Of his ambition's doom,

Which knelled upon a heart insatiate.  
Ambition gathers still about his tomb,  
And lays her wreaths of worship there,  
The sepulchre of darkness and despair;  
    That it may sink in endless gloom,  
Last monument of the dark and bloody past,  
And of earth's cruel tyrannies the last  
    Is now our hope and prayer!  
The while, auspicious on the new world shore,  
Marking the dawning of the kindlier age,  
    Rises one temple more,  
The ages' crown and faith's bright heritage.  
A nation's tribute to the honest heart,  
The simple faith, the open, friendly hand,  
The will that every soul shall play a part  
In life's rich drama in a favored land.



FIRST of the heroes who in this new world  
Herald the dawn of the new hope of man,  
Our Lincoln sleeps not in a marble tomb  
    Waiting decay's slow doom;  
But raised by a unanimous people's will,  
And resurrected in the living soul,  
He lives, he works his kindly purpose still,  
And leads his people to far-visioned goal.  
Our father, brother, he whom we adore,  
Our hero and our dear familiar friend,  
    Our god, if god there be  
    To hearken and implore,  
Our trusted guide and leader to the end.  
He speaks, the marble walls his words declare  
With greater power than when mystically,  
Before the lighted altar, the priest intones resounding  
    prayer.

With malice towards none, with charity towards all—  
What other age and other people heard  
    Such Christlike word  
From lips of conqueror or ruler fall?  
And those in slavery's hopeless tenement

Have felt from aching lin. d. the fetters fall,  
When he proclaimed the people's government,  
Of all, by all, for all, and all in all.

Memorialled in stone he sits apart,  
Our godlike Lincoln, like a god alone.

But builded not of stone  
Is his true temple and not made by hands,  
Nor is it founded on the shifting sands  
Of the despot's little hour or the tyrant's boast;  
Nor reared at cost  
Of blood and tears  
And wronged, protesting years.  
But it is builded of a people's will,  
And has its counterpart  
In every faithful heart,  
And though the marble crumble, it endures there still.  
It has grown out of human gratitude,  
The heart's thanksgiving is its source and spring,  
It stands a living monument as in a wood  
Towers towards heaven the regal forest king.  
Its floor and cornerstone are honest faith  
In God's good purpose manifest again;

Its open hall is love of liberty;  
The pure white pillars of its colonnade  
Are the strong will to peace which faithfully  
Uphold its noble crown—good will to men.

Although to-day  
We may not pause before the classic grace  
And feel the present spell of this memorial,  
Nor at our hero's feet our wreaths of worship lay,  
Nor bear from his calm face  
Blessing and peace, we may commemorate  
This holy festival  
Here in his own, this prairie state,  
And his great words repeat.  
With malice towards none, with charity  
Towards all our fellows, we here dedicate  
Our lives to liberty,  
Renew again our faith,  
And highly resolve that on this continent  
And in this nation there shall be rebirth  
Of freedom, so that the people's government,  
Saved at the cost of martyrdom and death,  
Shall flourish, shall not perish from the earth.









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